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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION

Case: 2:26-cr-20549
Assigned To : Parker, Linda V.
Referral Judge: Stafford, Elizabeth A.
Assign. Date : 8/20/2026
Description: IND USA V VINCENT MUNSTER ET AL (SS)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

v.

D1 – VINCENT JACOBUS MUNSTER
D2 – CLAUDE YINDA KWE

Violation:
18 U.S.C. § 371; 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2)

Defendants.
_____/

Indictment

The Grand Jury charges that:

Count One
Conspiracy to Smuggle Merchandise into the United States Contrary to Law
18 U.S.C. § 371

D1 – VINCENT JACOBUS MUNSTER
D2 – CLAUDE YINDA KWE

From in or about December, 2025, and continuing thereafter until on or about January 25, 2026, in the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division, and elsewhere, Vincent Jacobus Munster and Claude Yinda Kwe, knowingly conspired and agreed with each other, to commit an offense against the United States, namely, to smuggle merchandise into the United States contrary to law (e.g., the Select

Agent requirements codified under 42 C.F.R. § 73 & 42 C.F.R. § 71.54, the declaration requirements codified under 19 C.F.R. § 148.11, the transportation by air of biological samples codified under 49 C.F.R. § 173.4b, and the USDA permit requirements under 9 C.F.R. § 122.2) in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 545; and all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

OVERT ACTS

In furtherance of the conspiracy, and to achieve the object and purposes thereof, in the Eastern District of Michigan and elsewhere, the defendants performed, or caused to be performed the following overt acts, among others:

a. On or about December 17, 2025, Defendants Vincent Jacobus Munster and Claude Yinda Kwe personally met with a DNA sequencing scientist ("hereinafter "scientist") at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Rocky Mountain Laboratory (RML) in Hamilton, Montana. During the meeting, Munster and Kwe told the scientist that they were going to the Republic of Congo to retrieve approximately 100 samples consisting of mpox (formerly monkeypox) DNA

and were going bring the samples back to United States for DNA sequencing testing by the scientist.

b. On or about January 16, 2026, Munster and Kwe traveled together to the Republic of Congo on behalf of NIAID/RML to assist with a regional mpox outbreak.

c. Munster and Kwe returned to the United States on January 25, 2026. Munster and Kwe arrived at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, McNamara Terminal, in the Eastern District of Michigan, on board Delta Flight 229 from Paris, France, with travel originating from Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. Munster checked a piece of luggage for the flight, including a large plastic hard case.

d. At the airport's baggage reclaim carousel, Kwe retrieved the large plastic hard case and placed it on a cart next to Munster.

e. Munster and Kwe were travelling with a large plastic hard case that contained 113 microcentrifuge tubes containing

biological samples, including DNA isolates of mpox clades[1] 1 & 2.

f. Munster told CBP officers that the large plastic hard case contained "test kits," "assays," and "diagnostic reaction reagents."

g. Kwe, similar to Munster's explanation, told CBP officers that the large plastic hard case merely contained "diagnostics."

h. Munster later identified the ingredients of the materials, in writing, as "dNTPs nucleotides, Forward Primer 1, Reverse Primer 2, Probe-Fam labelled, and mg magnesium chloride," rather than biological samples, including DNA isolates of mpox clades 1 & 2.

i. Munster told CBP officers that the numbering on the 113 microcentrifuge tubes was for "inventory" purposes.

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1 Within an evolutionary tree, a branch that includes a single common ancestor and all of its descendants is called a clade. *See* https://www.nature.com/scitable/definition/clade-269/

Count Two
False Statements
18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2)

D1 – VINCENT JACOBUS MUNSTER

On or about January 25, 2026, in the Eastern District of Michigan, in a matter within the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security, an agency of the executive branch of the United States government, the defendant, Vincent Jacobus Munster, did knowingly and willfully make a materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement to officers of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Custom and Border Protection, in that Vincent Jacobus Munster made the statements outlined in Overt Acts f., h., and i., above. When in fact, Munster knew that the case contained biological samples, including DNA isolates of mpox clades 1 & 2, that MUNSTER would need specific approval and documentation to travel with via commercial flight and would have needed to declare upon arrival into the United States, all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2).

Count Three
False Statements
18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2)

D2 – CLAUDE YINDA KWE

On or about January 25, 2026, in the Eastern District of Michigan, in a matter within the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security, an agency of the executive branch of the United States government, the defendant, Claude Yinda Kwe, did knowingly and willfully make a materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement to officers of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Custom and Border Protection, in that Claude Yinda Kwe told CBP officers that the large plastic hard case contained "diagnostics." When in fact, Kwe knew that the case contained biological samples, including DNA isolates of mpox clades 1 & 2, that Kwe would need specific approval and documentation to travel with via commercial flight and would have needed to declare upon arrival into the United States, all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2).

Forfeiture Allegations

Upon conviction of the offense in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 371, 545 set forth in Count I of this Indictment, the defendants, VINCENT JACOBUS MUNSTER and CLAUDE YINDA KWE, shall forfeit to the United States of America, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 545, any merchandise introduced into the United States as a result of such violations, or the value thereof and shall forfeit to the United States of America, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 982(a)(2)(B), any property constituting, or derived from, proceeds obtained, directly or indirectly, as a result of such violation.

If any of the property described above, as a result of any act or omission of the defendants:

a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;

b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party;

c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court;

d. has been substantially diminished in value; or

e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty,

the United States of America shall be entitled to forfeiture of substitute property pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), as incorporated by Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(b)(1) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c).

This is a True Bill.

/s/ Grand Jury Foreperson
Grand Jury Foreperson

Jerome F. Gorgon Jr.
United States Attorney

/s/Douglas Salzenstein
Douglas Salzenstein
Chief, National Security Unit

/s/Timothy P. McDonald
Timothy P. McDonald
Assistant United States Attorney

Dated: August 20, 2026

United States District Court Eastern District of Michigan	**Criminal Case**

Case: 2:26-cr-20549
Assigned To : Parker, Linda V.
Referral Judge: Stafford, Elizabeth A.
Assign. Date : 8/20/2026
Description: IND USA V VINCENT MUNSTER ET AL (SS)

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the Assistant U.S. Attorney signing this form to

Companion Case Information	**Companion Case Number:**
This may be a companion case based upon **LCrR 57.10 (b)(4)[1]:**	**Judge Assigned:**
☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**	**AUSA's Initials:** TPM

Case Title: USA v. D1 Vincent Jacobus Munster, D2 Claude Yinda Kwe

County where offense occurred : Wayne County

Check One: ☒**Felony** ☐**Misdemeanor** ☐**Petty**

____Indictment/____Information --- **no** prior complaint.
__✓__Indictment/____Information --- based upon prior complaint [**Case number:** 26-mj-30139]
____Indictment/____Information --- based upon **LCrR 57.10 (d)** ***[Complete Superseding section below]***.

Superseding Case Information

Superseding to Case No: _____ **Judge:** _____

☐ Corrects errors; no additional charges or defendants.
☐ Involves, for plea purposes, different charges or adds counts.
☐ Embraces same subject matter but adds the additional defendants or charges below:

Defendant name	**Charges**	**Prior Complaint (if applicable)**

Please take notice that the below listed Assistant United States Attorney is the attorney of record for the above captioned case.

August 20, 2026
Date

Timothy P. McDonald

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[1] Companion cases are matters in which it appears that (1) substantially similar evidence will be offered at trial, or (2) the same or related parties are present, and the cases arise out of the same transaction or occurrence. Cases may be companion cases even though one of them may have already been terminated.